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The Relationship Between Psychological Climate and Organizational Commitment

¹A.Z. Nammi and ²Maryam Zarra Nezhad

¹Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz, Iran

²Young Researchers Club, Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran

Abstract: The aim of this study is to investigate the existence of relationships between components of psychological climate including autonomy, trust, pressure, cohesion, support, recognition, fairness and innovation and teachers, commitment to school, teaching occupation and work group. The study was conducted in one of the biggest cities (Ahvaz) in Iran, using a sample consisting of 170 teachers. Two methods were applied: Correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. Support was found for the existence of statistically significant relationships between psychological climate and components of organizational commitment. The result of multiple regression analysis showed that trust, innovation support, fairness and recognition have significant effects on the explanation of variance of organization commitment.

Key words: Psychological climate, fairness, innovation, commitment to school, teaching occupation

INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, impressive research efforts have been devoted to understanding the antecedent of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment means employees, loyalty and willingness to contribute to the organization. Employee commitment is of great importance; because high levels of commitment lead to several favorable organizational outcomes. Metaanalyses of commitment studies indicate that commitment is related negatively to turnover (Cooper-Hakim and Viswasvaam, 2005), absenteeism (Farrel and Stam, 1988) and counterproductive behaviors (Dalal, 2005) and positively to job satisfaction (Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran, 2005), motivation (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990) and organizational citizenship behaviors (Ricketta, 2002). This literature has also dealt with effects of commitment on performance (Meyer *et al.*, 1989). The low level of commitment is associated with low levels of morals (Decotiis and Summers, 1987) and altruism and compliance (Schappe, 1998). The low level of commitment from employees to their employers may harm reputation of the organization and affect the organization's ability to recruit high-quality employees (Mowday *et al.*, 1982). Most of these research efforts have been focused on industrial, organizational or occupational commitment (Mueller *et al.*, 1992). In the literature of which we are aware, only little research on organizational commitment in relation to educational

organizations has been conducted. Mottaz (1986) investigated the relationship between education and organizational commitment. In this study the relationship between education and organizational commitment in a variety of occupational groups has been analyzed. Results indicated that education has an indirect positive effect on organizational commitment by increasing work rewards, but a direct negative effect when work rewards are held constant. The latter finding is due to the higher work values associated with increased education. In his study Celep (2000) investigated Turkish teachers' levels of commitment to their schools, the tasks involved in teaching, work groups and the occupation. Teachers were asked about their commitment to the school, commitment to the teaching occupation, commitment to the daily work of teaching and commitment to collaborating with other working groups within the organization. The findings indicated that there is a direct relationship between teachers' organizational commitment and working group. There was a close relationship between variables related to teachers' commitment to their schools, the working group and the teaching occupation. Dee *et al.* (2006) examined the effects of four team-based structures on the organizational commitment of elementary teachers in an urban school district. The study model focuses on organizational commitment and includes three intervening, endogenous variables: teacher empowerment, school communication and work autonomy. Team teaching had both direct and indirect effects on commitment to the

school. Curriculum teamwork, governance teamwork and community-relations teamwork each contributed indirectly to higher levels of teacher commitment.

The concept of commitment from teachers to their educational organizations is a multidimensional notion. It has four dimensions. The first dimension is commitment to school which is defined as teachers' belief and acceptance of the goals and values and teachers' strong desires to keep up membership in the school. This definition is based on the concept of organizational commitment (Mowday *et al.*, 1979).

The second dimension is commitment to teaching occupation that is defined as teachers' attitudes toward their occupation. Commitment to teaching occupation was formulated in accordance with the concept that is professional commitment, career orientation, career commitment (Blau, 1985). The other dimension is commitment to teaching work which has been put forward by Morrow's (1983) approach. Commitment to teaching work is the physical and psychological occupied level of a teacher in his or her daily life. The last dimension is commitment to work group defined as the employee's sense of faithfulness and collaboration with other working group within an organization (Randall and Cote, 1991). In this respect, the commitment of teachers to work group in the school is based on density of the teachers' sense of faithfulness and collaboration with other teachers.

Commitment from teachers to their schools, students, teaching activities, occupation and colleagues, has positive influences on the effectiveness of school. One of the factors that impact on the teacher's commitment is psychological climate. Psychological climate refers to how organizational environments are perceived and interpreted by their employees (James and James, 1989; James *et al.*, 1990). James and James (1989) proposed that individuals cognitively appraise their work-related values. The appraisal is a reflection of the extent the organizational characteristics are important to the individual and his or her personal and organizational well-being (James *et al.*, 1990). Thus, psychological climate reflects a judgment by the individual about the degree to which the work environment is beneficial to their sense of well-being. Psychological climate can be distinguished from organizational climate (Rousseau, 1988) in that the latter represents a shared or summary perception that people attach to organizational practices and characteristics of the study setting (Schneider and Reichers, 1983). Organizational climate is based on individuals' perceptions of the organizational features, events and processes. When consensus among individuals exists, the perceptions are aggregated to represent organizational climate (Ostrff *et al.*, 2003).

The focus of present research was psychological climate. Psychological climate is important because it is the individual employees' perception and evaluations of the work environment, rather than the actual environment that mediates attitudinal and behavioral response (James and Jones, 1974; James *et al.*, 1978; Johns *et al.*, 1992). Researchers have assessed an array of psychological climate dimension, for example: work structure, role clarity, supportive management, team work, decision centralization and leader goal facilitation (Brown and Leigh, 1996, James and James, 1989; Kozlowski and Doherty, 1989; Prithard and Karasick, 1973). The approach taken in this study is based on the research of Koys and Decottis (1991) in which psychological climate is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of eight dimensions. Autonomy: the perception of self-determination with respect to work procedures, goals and priorities. Cohesion: the perception of togetherness of sharing within the organization setting, including the willingness of members of provides material aid. Trust: the perception of freedom to communicate openly with members at higher organizational levels about sensitive personal issues with the expectation that the integrity of such communication will not be violated. Pressure: the perception of time demands with respect to task completion and performance standards. Support: including the willingness to let members learn from their mistakes without fear of reprisal reorganization are acknowledged. Fairness: the perception that organizational practices are equitable and no arbitrary or capricious. Innovation: the perception that change and creativity are encouraged, including risk-taking into new areas or areas where the member has little or no prior experience.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study has been conducted in Ahvaz, Iran in 2007. The related population consists of the teachers from the all public elementary schools in the Ahvaz city. The questionnaires were administered to 200 teachers who were included to the sample and 180 questionnaires were taken back. But 170 questionnaires of the returned were evaluated in this research. Two questionnaires were used in this study to measure teacher's organizational commitment and psychological climate. Teacher's organizational commitment is assessed by teachers' organizational commitment scale (Celep, 2004). The Cronach alpha coefficient of reliability of 28 items of the organizational commitment scale in educational organizations was determined as 0.88. The Cronach alpha

coefficient of reliability of the factors was found out as commitment to school with 7 items is 0.75; commitment to teaching occupation with 6 item is 0.78; commitment to work group with 6 items is 0.81, commitment to teaching work with 7 items is 0.75. The reliability and validity of 28 items is 91 and 45. The reliability and validity of commitment to school is 77 and 43; commitment to teaching work is 80 and 51; commitment to teaching occupation is 82 and 52.

Psychological climate was measured by a 40 items scale developed and validated by Koys and de cotiis (1991). The scale has eight sub-scales: autonomy (5 items, $\alpha = 0.79$), cohesion (5 items, $\alpha = 0.80$), trust (5 items, $\alpha = 0.71$), pressure (5 items, $\alpha = 0.77$), support (5 items, $\alpha = 0.82$), recognition (5 items, $\alpha = 0.80$), fairness (5 items, 0.81) and innovation (5 items, 0.80). The response format was a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. The evidence indicates that all subscales have significant reliability and validity. The obtained reliability and validity of these subscales are (respectively) as follows: autonomy with 0.78 and 0.42, cohesion with 0.79 and 0.48), trust with 0.77 and 0.41, pressure with 0.77 and 0.50), support with 0.80 and 0.45, recognition with 0.71 and 0.41, fairness with 0.82 and 0.46 and innovation with 0.73 and 0.45.

In this study four hypotheses have presented that shows there are relationships between components of psychological climate and aspects of teachers, organizational commitment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean and standard deviations of the two measures are presented in Table 1.

Table 2 shows the relationship between psychological climate and teachers' organizational commitment.

The second hypothesis proposed that the relationships between dimensions of psychological climate and commitment to teaching occupation are statically significant. The evidence is in favor of this hypothesis.

The third hypothesis anticipated that there are significant correlation between psychological climate and commitment to teaching work. The findings suggest the existing of high and significant correlations between psychological climate dimensions and commitment to teaching work.

The fourth hypothesis expected that the relationship between psychological climate dimensions and commitment to work group are statically significant. The results support this hypothesis; because correlations between autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness and innovation, with commitment to work group statically significant at 95% level.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of psychological climate and organizational commitment

Components	Mean±SD	Components	Mean±SD
Autonomy	20.75±1.88	Fairness	14.70±2.22
Trust	18.66±4.99	Innovation	17.98±6.41
Pressure	13.42±2.50	Commitment to school	34.03±7.63
Support	18.76±5.44	Commitment to teaching	25.57±7.50
Recognition	17.50±5.43	Commitment to teaching work	23.80±6.75
Cohesion	17.23±4.47	Commitment to work group	19.72±5.51

Table 2: Correlations between psychological climate components and teachers organizational commitment

Components	CS	CTO	CTW	CWG
Autonomy	0.20*	0.18*	0.20*	0.22*
Cohesion	0.33*	0.29**	0.31*	0.33**
Trust	0.78*	0.68***	0.79***	0.77***
Pressure	-0.33**	-0.37**	-0.32**	-0.30**
Support	0.67***	0.61**	0.63***	0.66***
Recognition	0.65***	0.54***	0.65***	0.62***
Fairness	0.41**	0.32**	0.44**	0.44**
Innovation	0.70***	0.60***	0.68***	0.71***

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001, CS = Commitment to school, CTO = Commitment to teaching occupation, CTW = Commitment to teaching work, CWG = Commitment to work group

Table 3: Regression analysis of psychological climate on commitment to school with stepwise model

Antecedent variables	MR	RS	FP	Regression coefficients			
				1	2	3	4
Trust	0.78	0.61	168.73	b = 0.78 t = 12.99 P = 0.000			
Innovation	0.86	0.75	159.90	b = 0.58 t = 10.48 P = 0.000	b = 0.42 t = 7.63		
Support	0.89	0.79	131.70	b = 0.46 t = 8.24 P = 0.000	b = 0.36 t = 6.89	b = 0.25 t = 4.436	
Recognition	0.89	0.80	106.95	b = 0.40 t = 6094 P = 0.000	b = 0.32 t = 6.14	b = 0.22 t = 0.18	b = 0.15 t = 2.76
Fairness	0.90	0.81	89.31	b = 0.40 t = 7.0 P = 0.000	b = 0.29 t = 5.51	b = 0.22 t = 451	b = 0.74 t = 2.62 p = 0.010

Table 4: Regression analysis of psychological climate on commitment to teaching work with stepwise model

Antecedent variables	MR	RS	FP	Regression coefficients		
				1	2	3
Trust	0.70	0.49	1.3.21	b = 0.700 t = 10.160 P = 0.000		
Innovation	0.78	0.60	82.44	b = 0.510 t = 7.420 P = 0.000	b = 0.390 t = 5.640 p = 0.000	
Support	0.80	0.64	64.84	b = 0.400 t = 5.460 P = 0.000	b = 0.330 t = 4.840 p = 0.000	b = 0.250 t = 3.490 p = 0.001

Table 5: Regression analysis of psychological climate on commitment teaching occupation by stepwise model

Antecedent variables	MR	RS	FP	Regression coefficients				
				1	2	3	4	5
Trust	0.80	0.63	189.68	b = 0.80 t = 13.72 p = 0.000				
Innovation	0.87	0.75	166.57	b = 0.61 t = 11.23 p = 0.000	b = 0.39 t = 7.23 p = 0.000			
Support	0.88	0.78	127.49	b = 0.52 t = 0.06 P = 0.000	b = 0.64 t = 6.45 p = 0.000	b = 0.20 t = 3.56 p = 0.001		
Fairness	0.89	0.80	105.68	b = 0.51 t = 9.21 p = 0.000	b = 0.29 t = 5.58 p = 0.000	b = 0.19 t = 3.50 p = 0.001	b = 0.14 t = 3007 p = 0.003	
Recognition	0.90	0.81	91.48	b = 0.45 t = 7.91 p = 0.000	b = 0.26 t = 4.97 p = 0.000	b = 0.22 t = 451 p = 0.000	b = 0.13 t = 2.92 p = 0.004	b = 0.150 t = 2.760 p = 0.007

Table 6: Regression analysis of psychological climate on commitment work group by stepwise model

Antecedent variables	MR	RS	FP	Regression coefficients			
				1	2	3	4
Trust	0.77	0.60	163.38	b = 0.77 t = 12.78 p = 0.000			
Innovation	0.86	0.75	161.19	b = 0.56 t = 10.13 p = 0.000	b = 0.430 t = 7.200 p = 0.000	b = 0.130 t = 2.870 p = 0.006	
Support	0.88	0.78	127.84	b = 0.46 t = 8.12 p = 0.000	b = 0.390 t = 7.200 p = 0.000	b = 0.220 t = 3.980 p = 0.001	
Fairness	0.89	0.80	104.28	b = 0.45 t = 8.20 p = 0.000	b = 0.340 t = 6.350 p = 0.000	b = 0.210 t = 3.930 p = 0.001	b = 0.130 t = 2.870 p = 0.006

The results of multiple regression analysis in Table 3 show that only trust, innovation, support, recognition and fairness explain the variance of commitment to school.

Table 4 shows that from the eight components of psychological climate only trust, innovation and support have a significant effect on the explanation of variance of commitment to teaching work.

Table 5 shows that from the dimensions of psychological climate only trust, innovation, support, fairness and recognition have a significant effect on the explanation of variance of commitment teaching occupation.

Table 6 shows that from the components of psychological climate, trust, innovation, support and fairness have a significant effect on the explanation of variance of commitment work group.

CONCLUSION

Five hypotheses were tested and confirmed in this research. The results demonstrated clearly that teachers perception of their work environment influence directly their level of organizational commitment. These result is similar to those of Celep (2004) and Dee *et al.* (2006). In other words teachers, perception of aspects of the work

psychological climate such as autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness and innovation has a strong influence of commitment to school, commitment to teaching work, commitment to teaching occupation and commitment to work group. It is possible to state that the teacher who has commitment himself/herself to the school exerts great efforts for his school; is proud of his school and is willing to have responsibilities for the achievement of school. On the other hand, the teacher who has committed herself/himself to teaching work, helps the students out of the classroom; struggles more for the unsuccessful students; and creates possibilities for extra lesson on the case that routine class time is not sufficient for the planned lesson. The teacher who has commitment herself/himself to teaching occupation perceives his decision positively for choosing teaching occupation; realizes her/his professional values more important than other professional values; and is willing to work as a teacher even though he/she does not have economical problems. The results of multiple regressions analysis of eight components of psychological climate i.e., autonomy, trust, pressure, cohesion, support, recognition, fairness and innovation have significant effect on the explanation of variance of dimensions of organizational commitment.

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